REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-8 have been amended to make some minor grammatical improvements and to correct some minor antecedent basis problems so as to put them in better form for issuance in a U.S. patent.

In addition, claim 2 has been amended to clarify that the top face of the center frame faces upward away from a surface on which the construction machine is supported.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 1-8 be approved and entered.

It is respectfully submitted, moreover, that the amendments to the claims are clarifying in nature only, and do not narrow the scope of the claims either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-9 were all rejected under 35 USC 102 and/or 35 USC 102 as either being anticipated by or obvious in view of one or more of USP 4,393,341 ("Taghon"), JP 11-93209, JP 2001-106128,

JP 9-209402, JP 2001-106128 and USP 4,069,637 ("Braithwaite"). These rejections, however, are respectfully traversed.

According to the present invention as recited in amended claim 1, a crawler frame for a construction machine is provided which comprises a center frame and right and left track frames disposed on right and left sides of the center frame, respectively, so as to extend in a back and forth direction of the crawler frame. As recited in amended claim 1, moreover, the center frame comprises a central frame section and legs for connecting the central frame section to the track frames, and wherein the legs are formed from cast steel.

Thus, according to the claimed present invention, the legs of the center frame are cast steel. And it is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references disclose, teach or suggest this feature of the claimed present invention.

Specifically, Taghon discloses at column 3, lines 31 and 32 that "arms" 41 are formed by bending a sheet of metal and reinforcing the bent sheet, as shown in Fig. 4 of Taghon.

JP 11-093209 shows in Figs. 1 and 4 thereof that the central frame and legs are made from plates (side walls 33, 34 and upper and lower plates 35 and 36, as described in the abstract).

JP 2001-106128 shows a structure in Fig. 1 thereof that is made from shaped plates rather than from cast steel.

And JP 9-209402 shows in Figs. 4, 6, 14 and 17 thereof, sheets of metal that are used to make the central frame portion and legs.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Taghon, JP 11-093209, JP 2001-106128 and JP 9-209402 all disclose legs from a central frame section that are made of sheets or plates of metal, and that none of these references discloses, teaches or suggests a central frame portion comprising a central frame section and legs for connecting the central frame section to the track frames, wherein the legs are formed from cast steel.

It is respectfully submitted, moreover, that the structure of the present invention whereby the legs are cast steel has many advantages over the plate/sheet steel legs according to the prior art of record. In particular, since the legs of the central frame are cast steel it is unnecessary to connect the central frame section to the track frames by use of four legs formed by sheet metal welding of a steel plate, and so on, in a process with many steps, as in conventional technology. In addition, since with cast steel legs welding is only required at the joint surfaces of the central frame section of the center frame and the legs and for the joint surfaces of the legs and the inner side wall faces of the track frames only, the number of welding places can be reduced and welding can be easily carried

out, resulting in a significant reduction in the number of processes and processing time. Still further, since the legs are formed from cast steel, the thickness of the legs can be easily varied to be a desired thickness corresponding to a load of the structure supported by the legs, and therefore the internal stress of the legs can be made substantially uniform. See the disclosure in the specification at pages 6 and 7 of the present application.

With respect to claims 2, 3, 7 and 8, moreover, the Examiner has cited Braithwaite as disclosing legs having a convex or circular cross section. It is respectfully pointed out, however, that the present invention and the other cited references all relate to a crawler frame structure, whereas Braithwaite relates to the structure of a boom. And it is respectfully submitted that the mere disclosure of a tubular or cylindrical structure somewhere on a construction vehicle (such as on a boom as in Braithwaite) does not mean that it would have been obvious to use a tubular or cylindrical structure for the legs of a crawler frame structure in the manner of the claimed present invention. Indeed, it is respectfully pointed out that, as recognized by the Examiner, none of the cited references relating to a crawler frame structure disclose legs having a tubular or cylindrical structure as recited in claims 2 and 3.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended claim 1 and claims 2-8 depending therefrom clearly patentably distinguishes over all of the cited references, taken singly or in any combination, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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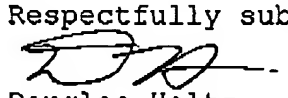
Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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